

Reply to Office Action dated July 13, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-11, 13-20 and 22-27 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 7, 10, 13, 16 22 and 26 are amended and claims 6, 12 and 21 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Office Action's indication that claims 6-9, 12-14 and 21-24 contain allowable subject matter. By this Amendment, the allowable features of dependent claim 6 are incorporated into independent claim 1, the allowable features of dependent claim 12 are incorporated into independent claim 10 and the allowable features of dependent claim 21 are incorporated into independent claim 16. Claims 10 and 26 are also amended for consistency to change "lower" to --second--. Thus, each of independent claims 1, 10 and 16 define patentable subject matter. It is respectfully submitted that the applied references do not teach or suggest at least the features of the independent claims. Each of the dependent claims depends from one of the independent claims and therefore defines patentable subject matter at least for this reason. Withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and prompt allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-5, 7-11, 13-20 and 22-27 are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the

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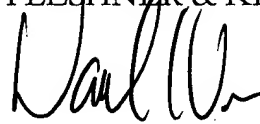
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application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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